

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

DEPARTING 2006 PAGES

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. KILDEE. Madam Speaker, today is a day of mixed emotion for all of us who work with the Page Program. It is time to say good-bye to 26 young aspiring individuals who have served the U.S. Congress for the last 5 months.

On behalf of the U.S. House of Representatives, I would like to thank you all for your hard work, commitment and dedication to the Page Program.

I know you have made your families, friends and communities back home proud, and I am certain that they will be glad to get you back. As difficult as it is to say good-bye, I trust that you will take with you memories, experiences and friends that will last a lifetime. Take with you also our sincere thanks for a job well done. Your hard work and dedication have proven that you are young people with strength, courage and character. We look forward to hearing about all of your many future successes. Best wishes for safe travels home, luck in the rest of your Junior year, and much happiness always. There is no question that you are all destined for bright futures.

May God bless you all.

DEPARTING PAGES FOR 2006

1. Nicole Alexander—TX
2. Alexandra Beletic—UT
3. Chelsea L. Bryan—FL
4. Rebecca Dawson—AL
5. Christopher Day—FL
6. Austen Edwards—GA
7. Alex Finch—MI
8. Emily Hall—IA
9. Brittany Hatley—CA
10. Virginia Heppner—VA
11. Samuel Hocking—NJ
12. Xavier Jackson—FL
13. Chelsea Kerkstra—MI
14. Erica Kuhlman—PA
15. Chelsea Loehr—KS
16. Patrick McConlogue—CA
17. Jaime Mendal—FL
18. Jamie Morrissey—PA
19. Mariah Mumford—MI
20. Zachary Owens—IL
21. Erik Rison—VA
22. Arriel Rubinstein—NJ
23. Blaise Selby—CO
24. Kayla Smith—IA
25. Alex Vincent—PA
26. Adam Zeldin—AZ

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA AND UNITED STATES TERRITORIES CIRCULATING QUARTER DOLLAR PROGRAM ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. SPENCER BACHUS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, January 23, 2007

Mr. BACHUS. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 392, the District of Co-

lumbia and United States Territories Circulating Quarter Dollar Program Act, introduced by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia, Ms. NORTON.

We are all aware of the popularity of the 50-State quarter program, which will continue through 2008. The Treasury has benefited from more than \$6 billion worth of quarters taken out of circulation by serious and amateur collectors alike.

The gentleman from Delaware, Mr. CASTLE, deserves great credit for the State quarters program. He came up with the idea, worked tirelessly through two Congresses, and brought the Treasury Department on board back in the mid-1990s.

H.R. 392 would establish a quarters program for the District of Columbia and U.S. territories in 2009, after the 50-State program runs its course. This is actually the fifth Congress in which we've tried to pass this program. I managed consideration of the bill in the House in September 2000. It has passed the House in every succeeding Congress, but has never been taken up—even at the committee level—in the other body.

The quarters program has immense educational value. Teachers prepare lesson plans based on each new quarter, and parents save them and discuss them with their children. H.R. 392 is a way to recognize the contributions made to the United States by people from the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the territories.

Madam Speaker, this is good legislation, and I am glad we are taking it up as one of the first bills from the Financial Services Committee in the 110th Congress. This is bipartisan legislation, as much of the work product of the committee has been since I came to Congress, and I look forward to continuing that tradition with the new chairman, the gentleman from Massachusetts, Mr. FRANK. I only hope that this time, the legislation will win full congressional approval and be sent to the President for his signature.

Madam Speaker, I welcome this bill and urge its immediate adoption.

INTRODUCTION OF THE KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT

HON. FORTNEY PETE STARK

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 24, 2007

Mr. STARK. Madam Speaker, I rise today to join Congressmen RAMSTAD and KENNEDY in introducing the bipartisan and bicameral "Keeping Families Together Act." This bill is a first step in ending the practice of custody relinquishment, which the President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health called "appalling." Every year, families are forced to give up legal custody of their severely mentally ill children to State child welfare agencies in order get these children the health care they need. Senators SUSAN COLLINS (ME) and TOM

HARKIN (IA) are introducing companion legislation in the Senate.

Imagine being the parent of a sick child desperately in need of assistance. Your private insurance does not cover mental health care, yet you earn too much to qualify for Medicaid. If you want your child to get treatment you must turn over custody to the child welfare or juvenile justice agency. Now, imagine what affect this awful situation has on the child. The child is already battling mental illness and is now "abandoned" by their family and stigmatized as a "foster child."

These are horrible decisions that a family should never be forced to make. Yet, a 2003 GAO report, surveying 19 States, found that over 12,700 mentally ill children were placed with child welfare or juvenile justice agencies for the sole purpose of obtaining needed mental health care. The actual number of families torn apart is certainly much higher when all 50 States are taken into account.

The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law has further elaborated on the situations that cause parents and guardians to have to give up their mentally ill children to State agencies. These situations include the following:

The family has either exhausted private health benefits, or the benefits did not cover the required services, such as residential treatment programs.

The family lives in a jurisdiction in which children are deprived of mental health services through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) as a result of a restrictive definition of serious mental illness. For example, the school simply labels these children as "discipline problems" and do not properly identify their mental illness.

The family resides in a jurisdiction that falsely interprets federal child welfare law (Title IV-E of the Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program) as requiring custody relinquishment even for temporary out-of-home placements.

Whatever the cause may be for the families' desperate situation, their nightmare is certainly real. The "Keeping Families Together Act" is a first step toward ending this nightmare and ensuring children get the care they need without being torn from their families.

This bill does two primary things:

It creates \$100 million in competitive State grants over 6 years to improve access to State mental health and family support services for families in danger of losing their children because they cannot afford mental health care. States are eligible if they are willing to end the practice of child custody relinquishment and create alternate avenues to getting children needed care while keeping them with their families.

It establishes a federal interagency task force, as recommended by the April 2003 GAO report, to monitor and evaluate the family support grants. The task force will make recommendations to Congress for improving mental health services and removing barriers that have caused child custody relinquishment. This will give Congress the information we

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